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CIA HISTORICAL STAFF

The Clandestine Service Historical Series

THE ILLEGAL BORDER-CROSSING PROGRAM
1946 - 1959

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based personnel during 1947 and 1948.

The Ryabov Case

Of interest, however, is one case which apparently had no CI ramifications, and which was a harbinger of the path Soviet operations were to take a decade and more in the future. This involved a Soviet political officer with the rank of major and the putative name of Vasiliy Nikolayevich Ryabov, and his German girl friend.* Ryabov had been wounded in 1945 during the Soviet capture of Berlin and had been brought back to health by a German nurse, who later became his girl friend. In 1947 Ryabov was stationed in Dresden. His girl friend resided in West Berlin, where information on her attachment to the Soviet major came to the attention of Captain Alexander Sogolow, an S-2 officer in liaison with CIA's Berlin Base. George Belic of the Berlin Base was thereupon put in contact

* Data on this case derive primarily from personal interviews with case officers who were directly involved. The writer was unable to verify whether Ryabov was the major's true name, nor was he able to establish the nurse's identity. A thorough search of various CS document repositories failed to unearth operational files, personality dossiers, or other vital data on this case. Neither RID/201, RID/Cryptic Reference, nor CI Staff was able to provide meaningful information. A 201 file allegedly associated with CARAVAN in fact refers to a person who has no connection with the case.

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with Ryabov and the nurse, and from October 1947 to December 1949 Ryabov acted as the principal agent in the CARAVAN operation, which for a time also carried the designation DODGE. In 1948 the case was taken over in Berlin by Boleslav A. Holtsman. The German girl acted as courier between the major in Dresden and the Americans in West Berlin. Ryabov had immediate family members in Moscow, and he was unwilling to opt for an outright defection because of the penalties his relatives would undergo if he fled. His reporting on Soviet order of battle and on Soviet intentions during the height of the Berlin Blockade in 1948 was judged of outstanding value. Operational planning included the staging of an accident complete with a corpse from the Berlin morgue provided with documents alleging that the body was that of Major Ryabov. CIA operational capabilities in the Soviet Zone of Germany were limited, however, and in December 1949 Ryabov was transferred to Moscow for a tour of duty with the Soviet Ministry of Defense. Prior to his departure, Ryabov was briefed on plans to aid in his future exfiltration via Finland or Iran. Although CIA obtained word of his safe arrival in Moscow, the Agency was unable to

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maintain a viable means of communication with an agent in the Soviet capital and contact with the officer was lost. The German girl friend was evacuated by CIA to West Germany.[11]/

The Shift to Munich

By 1948 Munich, the capital of Bavaria, which was entirely within the American Zone of Occupation, became the main center of operational activity against the Soviet target. Two factors contributed greatly to this development. Munich, unlike Berlin and Vienna, was deep within the American Zone and therefore unencumbered with confrontations and juridical disputes with the Soviet forces, who had no access or authority in the American Zone. Secondly, most displaced persons from the USSR were concentrated in the American Zone and established their political, welfare, and cultural centers in the Bavarian capital. New escapees from Eastern Europe, such as the wave of Czechs and Slovaks who fled from their homeland after the February 1948 Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, tended to gravitate toward Bavaria. Thus the Strategic Services Unit (SSU)-CIG base in Munich early in the post-war years was obliged by circumstances to keep abreast of Soviet

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organize an Assessment and Recruitment Section within CSOB, Munich, to specialize in these matters.

The Assessment and Recruitment Section of CSOB was organized in March 1952 with Sogolow as chief [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

[redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)

Sogolow was also assigned liaison and coordination duties with the ZRELOPE paramilitary agent recruitment program which was eventually placed under the Assessment and Recruitment Section of CSOB for the spotting, assessing, and recruiting of all ZRELOPE USSR agent candidates.[32/]

3. Recruitment

The recruitment of REDSOX agents of Soviet nationality almost always was based on their ideologicel opposition to the Bolshevik dictatorship. In the case of Soviet minority nationals such as the Ukrainians, Balts, and Armenians, the ideological motivating factor was that of opposition to Soviet Russian imperialism and the possible liberation of their homelands. Financial remuneration played the dominant role only with strictly mercenary agents who undertook to perform a REDSOX mission in return for a fixed fee. The border-crossing missions undertaken on CIA's behalf by certain

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[redacted] nationals are an example of the strictly cash-for-services-rendered arrangement. Financial considerations were also the primary motivations of the [redacted] air crews who undertook "black" flights into the USSR on REDSOX agent-drop missions.* (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3)

Upon completion of the assessment package and receipt of appropriate operational security clearance, the recruitment "ceremony" usually included the signing of a secrecy agreement and a contractual obligation on the part of the Agency to establish a savings fund in which the agent's salary and any bonuses would be held in escrow pending the completion of his mission. The Agency's name was never used in the recruitment of REDSOX agents. Agreements were usually made with the US Government, the Department of Defense, or the US Army. Undoubtedly, however, many agents guessed or deduced that they were dealing with CIA.

In cases of REDSOX agents provided by the anti-Soviet emigre groups, recruitment for penetration missions was done by the emigre group concerned and a

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* Ironically, these mercenaries were virtually the only ones to survive their missions. See Att. B.

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